

77 contact with many centers of the world. Many Finns studied in the universities of Southern and Central Europe, in Paris, Bologna, Prague, and later on in the German universities. The reformation reached Finland directly from Wittenberg, where young Finnish men were studying under Luther and other leaders of the German movement. The reformer of Finland was Bishop Michael Agricola, who originated the Finnish literary language. The first book in Finnish, a primer, was published in 1538, the New Testament in 1548. The Finns accepted the new doctrine readily enough without any [195] fights or other demonstrations, and towards the end of the century Lutheranism was firmly established in the country.

000 During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Indiana U S-4, 5(no date)1955 EO1 Finland EO1

771

The reformer of

Finland, Bishop Michael Agricola, in one of his books gives a long list of deities worshipped by the Tavastians and the Karelians respectively, which shows that at the time (around 1550) pagan beliefs and practices were still well remem-

538 bered. The old epic poetry of the Finns displays

an original mixture of pagan and Christian conceptions, and many of the Bible stories and Christian legends are turned into charming

795 mythical ballads. All the same, the Catholic

Church was an important influence in Finland both religiously and politically all through the

[793] Middle Ages. The bishops of Finland, mostly native Finns, were as a whole able and influential men who used their position in the council of the King to work selflessly for the benefit of their country and people.

795 The reformation was carried out in Finland

771

without much controversy, and in 1593 Sweden-

Indiana U S-4, 5 (no date) 1955 EO1 Finland EO1

795 Finland officially adopted the Lutheran creed.

The bishops and ministers worked energetically for the uprooting of the pagan beliefs and succeeded in extinguishing the old poetry (which was supposed to have been inspired by the devil)

212 in the western parts of the country. The Lutheran Church attached much importance to the instruction of the people and it deserves credit

795 for effectively teaching the Finns to read. The ability to read and to write and a knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Church were made prerequisite for anyone wishing to enter matrimony, and slow readers were punished by being placed in stocks before the church on Sundays. Thus, in the western parts of the country, literacy was already quite common towards the end of the seventeenth century.

[582]

795 Even today the Lutheran Church holds by far

795 the most important position in the religious life of Finland. Since 1923 there has been complete freedom of religion, but only a few have withdrawn from the Church, and other denominations (not including the Greek Catholics), openly permitted since 1880, have very small memberships.

162 In 1948 the distribution of the different religious groups among the citizens of Finland was as follows:

Lutherans	3,998,344 persons (95.8 per cent of the entire population)
-----------	--

Others (total)	177,392 persons (4.2 per cent)
----------------	-----------------------------------

In Civil Register (not belonging to any church)	90,341
--	--------

Greek Catholics	71,123
-----------------	--------

Free Lutherans	5,441
----------------	-------

Seventh Day Adventists	2,671
------------------------	-------

1:Indiana U S-4, 5(no date)1955 EO1 Finland EO1

771 in Ostrobothnia were actually the first to take arms at the outbreak of the Finnish War of Independence.

771 A study of the specific religious faiths does
795
● not reflect any ethnic differences. The majority of the Greek Catholics are to be found among the Karelians, formerly living in the eastern-most communities of Finland, and those in the Civil Register are predominantly city people, partly radical-minded intellectuals, partly workers with communist views. In many cases the reasons for leaving the Church have been economic, for those listed in the Civil Register are exempted from the taxes collected by the Church. The fact that despite this economic factor there has never been any mass movement away from the Church reflects the influence which the fathers' faith still has over the people.

797 missionary centers and churches working among the Finnish sailors and emigrants in various parts of the world.

795 The Church of Finland has a position midway
659 between an established and a free Church. The highest administrative authority belongs by law to the President of the Republic and to the State government, but at the same time the Church has considerable powers of self government, much more so than the Lutheran churches in neighboring Scandinavia. Legislative power is exercised by the Church Assembly, which has 115 representatives, the majority of them laymen. The laws passed by the Assembly must be ratified by the Diet, which can either accept or reject them, but which is not entitled to make any alterations. The highest administrative organs for the church are the Enlarged Bishops'

795 Meeting with 31 members and the Ecclesiastic Board, consisting of six persons, mostly ministers and jurists, and handling economic as well as legal matters. The Ecclesiastic Board 794 is in charge of the Central Church Fund. The majority of the congregations¹ are self sufficient, as they have the right to tax their members and to use the income for their own needs: for the salaries of the ministers and other church personnel, for the upkeep of church buildings and cemeteries, and for social work. The wealthiest congregations, however, contribute a certain percentage of their income to the Central Fund to help those who are not able to meet their own needs. About one-sixth of the congregations, mostly located in the northern and eastern regions or in the western archipelago, need assistance from the Central Fund. Before World War II
2 [of the Church of Finland - Analyst]

Indiana U S -4, 5 (no date) 1955 EO1 Finland EO1

659
874
793

The

State, on the other hand meets the costs of the

Theological Faculty in the University of Helsinki,

where the vast majority of the ministers receive

their education. To keep the scholarship of the

ministers on a high level, only those graduated

from the theological faculties of the University

of Helsinki or of the Swedish-speaking university

in Turku can be ordained as officiating ministers.

871 The State also arranges instruction in religion

659

in all grades of the primary and secondary

schools according to the denomination of the

children. The Greek Catholic children thus get

special instruction; those outside the church need

not be present at the lessons, although they

usually prefer to attend the classes in religion.

795

The Greek Catholic Church has a position

corresponding to that of the Lutheran. It also

has a vast autonomy under the jurisdiction of

795 the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

There are two dioceses, each headed by a bishop. Most of the Greek Catholic congregations were situated in the area ceded to Russia after World War II. Now their 70,000 members live scattered all over the country.

798 Thus the Finns represent a religiously uni-
771 form group. There have been no religious persecutions, no fights between different denominations. The absence of influential religious minorities has no doubt contributed to the fact that there is little religious fanaticism, and religious considerations hardly influence the national attitude towards foreign countries--except for those in which religion has been officially abandoned and persecuted. And, of course, a common religion is apt further to strengthen the ties that connect Finland with the Scandinavian states.